



# REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD

## Promoting Normal, Age-Appropriate Experiences for Youth in Foster Care

### WHAT IS THE REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD?

To normalize the lives of youth in care, in alignment with federal law, New Mexico's Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD) has implemented a 'reasonable and prudent parent standard'. This is 'the standard of care characterized by careful, nurturing and thoughtful decision-making by the foster parent or out of home provider that is intended to maintain a child's health, safety, culture or cultural identity, and best interests while encouraging the child's emotional, social, and developmental growth' (8.26.2.7MM NMAC). This includes involvement in extracurricular, cultural, enrichment, and social activities, including opportunities for safe risk-taking and other experiences typical of youth not in foster care.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

The reasonable and prudent parent standard is intended to promote 'normalcy' – the ability to engage in healthy and developmentally appropriate activities that promote well-being – for all young people in care. When young people are exposed to experiences that create positive stress, they learn how to effectively manage stress, regulate emotions, and develop the social, behavioral, and cognitive coping resources needed to overcome obstacles throughout the course of their lives.

### HOW DOES THIS STANDARD WORK?

CYFD empowers its caregivers to approve a youth's participation in activities, based on the caregiver's own assessment using a reasonable and prudent parent standard. Foster care providers are not required to obtain advance permission from CYFD to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions about the care of a child or youth.

In applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver considers factors such as the:

- Young person's individuality, including cultural identity, spiritual identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Young person's age, maturity, and developmental level
- Potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity
- Importance of encouraging emotional and developmental growth, and providing the most safe and family-like living experience possible

**LEARN MORE** by contacting:

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